

Docket No. AT9-98-464

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR A META DATA SERVICE IN A DATA PROCESSING SYSTEM

As a solution to the problem of distributed knowledge of data object definitions, data object definitions are removed from the source code. A Meta Data Service is created and made available on a network which knows the definitions of all of the objects that are used by applications that are designed to use the Meta Data Service. When an object is created, the Meta Data Service creates and stores a meta definition for the object. Data objects are passed over a network in a "soft" format. Applications within a distributed data processing system are designed in such a manner such that, at any stage of object processing, an application does not assume to understand the definition or structure of an object, nor is an application hard-coded with the object definitions. At each stage, an application queries the Meta Data Service for the meta definition of the object before proceeding with the processing of an object. The application then receives a meta definition for the data object that allows the application to perform properly tailored processing for the data object.